

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of importing supplier information for use by a purchasing computing system, the method comprising:

establishing communication by a purchasing computing system with an external service provider that includes a server including an external directory of suppliers and information relating to the suppliers;

sending a request from the purchasing computing system and to the external service provider, the request identifying a user-selected one of the suppliers included potential business partner in the external directory;

receiving a response from the external service provider and at the purchasing computing system directory, the response including information relating to the selected supplier potential business partner;

parsing the information in the received response; and

creating, using the information parsed from the response, a new business partner entry for the selected supplier in an internal a directory that is usable by the purchasing computing system with the information parsed from the response.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the response comprises information in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said creating comprises mapping the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the response comprises an XML page.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiating a business process which requires a business partner.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
completing the business process with the new business partner entry.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising generating a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether the user has authority to approve the new business partner entry.
10. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

flagging the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.
11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

generating a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and

flagging the purchasing document as on hold.
12. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

determining an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.
13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

generating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.
14. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

deleting the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.

15. (Currently Amended) An article comprising a machine-readable medium storing instructions operable to cause one or more machines to perform operations of importing supplier information for use by a purchasing computing system, the operations comprising:

establishing communication by a purchasing computing system with an external service provider that includes a server including an external directory of suppliers and information relating to the suppliers;

sending a request from the purchasing computing system and to the external service provider, the request identifying a user-selected one of the suppliers included potential business partner in the external directory;

receiving a response from the external service provider and at the purchasing computing system directory, the response including information relating to the selected supplier potential business partner;

parsing the information in the received response; and

creating, using the information parsed from the response, a new business partner entry for the selected supplier in an internal a directory that is usable by the purchasing computing system with the information parsed from the response.

16. (Original) The article of claim 15, wherein the response comprises information in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol.

17. (Original) The article of claim 16, wherein said creating comprises mapping the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.

18. (Original) The article of claim 16, wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

19. (Original) The article of claim 16, wherein the response comprises an XML page.

20. (Original) The article of claim 15, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiating a business process which requires a business partner.

21. (Original) The article of claim 20, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

completing the business process with the new business partner entry.

22. (Original) The article of claim 21, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising generating a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

23. (Original) The article of claim 15, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

determining whether the user has authority to approve the new business partner entry.

24. (Original) The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

flagging the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

25. (Original) The article of claim 24, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and

flagging the purchasing document as on hold.

26. (Original) The article of claim 23, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

determining an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.

27. (Original) The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

generating an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

28. (Original) The article of claim 26, further comprising instructions operable to cause the one or more machines to perform operations comprising:

deleting the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.

29. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

an internal directory including information relating to a plurality of business partners;
a network device; and

an electronic procurement system operative to

establish communication with an external service provider that includes a server
~~including an external~~ directory of suppliers and information relating to the suppliers;

send a request to the external service provider, the request identifying a user-
selected one of the suppliers included ~~potential business partner~~ in the external directory;

receive a response from the external service provider ~~directory~~, the response
including information relating to the selected supplier ~~potential business partner~~;

parse the information in the received response; and

create, using the information parsed from the response, a new business partner
entry for the selected supplier in the internal directory ~~with the information parsed from~~
~~the response.~~

30. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein the response comprises information in a format compliant with a partner interface protocol.

31. (Original) The system of claim 30, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to map the parsed information into fields according to the partner interface protocol.

32. (Original) The system of claim 30, wherein the response comprises an HTML page.

33. (Original) The system of claim 30, wherein the response comprises an XML page.

34. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

prior to said establishing communication with the server, initiate a business process which requires a business partner.

35. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

complete the business process with the new business partner entry.

36. (Original) The system of claim 35, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate a purchase order using the new business partner entry.

37. (Original) The system of claim 29, further comprising:

determine whether the user has authority to approve the new business partner entry.

38. (Original) The system of claim 37, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

flag the new business partner entry as incomplete in response to determining the user does not have said authority.

39. (Original) The system of claim 38, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate a purchasing document with said new business partner entry; and

flag the purchasing document as on hold.

40. (Original) The system of claim 34, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

determine an authorized approver for the new business partner entry.

41. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

generate an approval workflow item for the authorized approver.

42. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the electronic procurement system is further operative to:

delete the new business partner entry from the internal directory in response to the authorized approver not approving the new business partner entry.